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The War and the Patriot's Duty.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN PARK STREET CHURCH,

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 1861,

BY

REV. A. L. STONE.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY HENRY HOYT.

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THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

TO REV. A. L. STONE.

The undersigned, who had the pleasure of listening to your able, eloquent, and patriotic discourse, preached before the Park Street Church and Society this morning, believing that its sentiments should be widely diffused, would most respectfully request a copy for publication.

We are very truly your obedient servants,

A. O. BREWSTER,
HENRY HOYT,
JAMES A. DIX,
C. L. BARTLETT,
H. O. BRIGGS,
JNO. J. NEWCOMB,
EBEN CUTLER,
W. T. GLIDDEN,
EZRA FARNSWORTH,
SAMUEL NEAL,
NATHAN CROWELL,
EDWARD B. HALL.

BOSTON, April 21, 1861.

BOSTON, SABBATH NOON, }
April 21, 1861. }

GENTLEMEN: If I yield to your request, it must be of course on the instant, with no opportunity of revising or reconsidering the words I have uttered. But I am willing to stand by them, and to speak them to the widest possible auditory. I submit the MS. to your disposal.

Yours in devotion to our common country,

A. L. STONE.

MESSRS. A. O. BREWSTER and others.



THE WAR AND THE PATRIOT'S DUTY.

“ Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me; the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.” — *Judges xi. 27.*

AT that period in the history of Israel, called “the time of the judges,” and at a point in that period of great distraction and confusion in national affairs, no judge at the head of the administration,— the princes discordant among themselves, every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, and the whole nation corrupting itself with idolatry,— the king of the Ammonites moved a great army into the pleasant and fruitful vales of Gilead, with intent to subject all that fertile region east of the river to his own sway. It is well for the children of Israel in Gilead that they succeed in making Jephthah their captain, and commit the conduct of the war to him. He accepts the trust, and justifies the confidence reposed in him by the wise and prompt measures which he adopts. The armed invaders are already upon his soil; the Ammonites are the trespassers, but Jephthah is patient and forbearing. He does not precipitate himself upon his enemies,— “a word and a blow,” the blow first,— but sends messengers to the invading king to ask the reason and the justification of this act of hostility. When was ever the hand of vio-

lence without a pretext for striking? The king asserts that when the Israelites came up out of Egypt they dispossessed him of those very lands, and that he is there to regain his own; a claim that has slumbered three hundred years trumped up now, evidently for the occasion. Still, Jephthah is patient and calm. It is worth while, if he can, to show the Ammonites the injustice of their claim, to convince them of the righteousness of Israel's cause, and by argument and persuasion to turn back the tide of strife. And again he sends messengers to rehearse the matter at large,—how that the Ammonites had been originally dispossessed by the Amorites; that the Amorites had waged an unjust war against Israel and lost these lands to her in that conflict; that the Supreme Disposer and Executive had commanded Israel to take possession of this region and hold it for him; that they had held for three centuries; that their holding had never been molested or disputed, and that therefore the present invasion was unjustifiable. Little cared the covetous king of Ammon about the right of the case. Probably he and his forces encouraged themselves over this long delay, this fruitless negotiation on the part of the new captain and the men of Gilead. They said, very likely, one to another, "These men are afraid to fight us; they will yield all we have demanded. If they had not been cowards, or altogether unprepared to meet us in arms, they would not have stood talking so long. We have only to show a bold front, and these rich prov-

inces are ours, even to the banks of the Jordan ; and then, as the next step, the whole Jordan valley on either bank, the border provinces, will fall to our dominion.”

They had mistaken their man. While delaying and negotiating, Jephthah had been assembling forces at Mizpeh. He had put the Ammonites into the wrong. He had shown his desire for a righteous peace. He had pushed his forbearance to its utmost limit. Before God and man he had convicted the invaders of committing a wanton and indefensible assault. Then he marched, and the battle was joined. And the Lord delivered the Ammonites into the hands of Jephthah ; “and he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.”

From the horizon that has been darkening day by day for months past, as our eyes have looked southward, there have shot up at last the lurid clouds of war. Out of the bosom of the cloud we have seen the sulphurous flashes and heard the crash of the thunders, and know that the bolts of doom have fallen. The curtain that hung before the scene in that southern harbor, where one little patriot band stood at bay, ringed about with a score of iron-mouthed batteries, rose, and the gaze of thirty millions of people in this land was fastened upon the opening of the great tragedy. Against

the brave old flag and its few defenders, traitorous and rebel hands launched the missives of death and destruction. For awhile it waved amid clouds and smoke, and its champions gave back the stormy salutation of the hostile leaguer, fourscore against seven thousand, and then upon the well-defended and blackened ruin came down the stainless bunting, a martial shroud for the lost fortress. And over the land, from city to city, and home to home, wakening the echoes of every hill-side and every hearthstone,— uttered by the lightning's fiery tongue, repeated by the press, and vibrating on all the air,— has gone one brief word, that has in it a world of dreadful meaning, “War!” “War!” That word is ringing in our ears to-day; we cannot shut it out. That meaning is on our hearts; we cannot throw off the burden.

Do you ask, Why repeat that word here, within this calm retreat, consecrated to the utterance of that gospel which is “peace on earth, good will to men?” If all the air outside is stirred by it, why not keep these sacred hours, and this sacred place, for other words and sounds,— the words of love and mercy? Because the most momentous question we can ask to-day of the oracles of God, is what spirit we ought to cherish, and what duties we have to perform in this great stress that is come upon us; because our country has a right to be remembered, as we come with all that keep holy time, to the Throne of Grace; because we cannot, as Christian patriots, forget her before God in this day of trouble;

because nothing has more at stake, in a time of war, than God's religion and all its ordinances; because by example of our godly ancestry, our old puritan worthies of the New England pulpit, who consecrated the banners, and baptized the swords, and blessed the soldier, in the ancient fight for freedom, and sometimes went before him to the field, as on the greensward of Lexington on that April day, long ago, — their descendants in the pulpit cannot be true to God in the discharge of their sacred functions unless they are true to their country; and because, for one, I believe that there is no duty for the Christian pastor so sacred to-day as to seek to swell, and steady, and guide the currents of patriotic self-devotion. Very likely some of you will judge otherwise. I am not indifferent to the judgment of my fellow-men, but as I think and believe I must speak. Let us look, then, at our relations and our duties in the strange tragic time upon which we are fallen.

And the first point is, Can we truthfully and honestly borrow the words of Jephthah the Gileadite to the king of Ammon, as our vindication to our brethren and foes-men of the South, "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee?" The question is not whether individuals have spoken harshly, rashly, and unfraternally against their fellow-citizens of the Southern States. Not whether the Northern conscience has widely and earnestly pronounced against the inherent unrighteousness of the great domestic institution of the South.

Not whether by all means fairly and lawfully open to Christian reformers—the pen, the press, the pulpit, the rostrum, the varied voices of free discussion — humane and philanthropic men have done their best to revolutionize the public sentiment of this land and bring us back to the acknowledged position of the fathers and founders of the Republic. Not whether in the settlement of new territories, freedom has poured in her majorities and saved the virgin soil from the curse of slavery. Not whether one half-crazed old man, on his responsibility to God and his own soul, dashed himself upon the ramparts of that institution in a wild crusade. None of these issues have been made. It is known that none of these are the real issues. It is a parricidal hand that has been lifted. The blow that has been struck has been delivered against the breast of the National Government. The question is, the only pertinent question, **WHAT HAS THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT DONE TO INJURE OR OFFEND ONE OR SEVEN STATES OF THE SOUTH?** And that question cannot be answered. It will go down the stream of history unanswered and unanswerable. Not one right has been trampled on; not one immunity withheld; not one privilege denied; not one liberty infringed; and not even a solitary interest threatened. If the issue were with Northern freemen as individuals, it could not be successfully maintained that the South had ever suffered any wrong. If any right in this land is sacred and universal, it is the right of free dis-

cussion, and the exercise of this right is the extent of northern sinning. We have thought and felt and believed, and have therefore spoken, but we have obeyed the laws. We have kept the Constitution, only contending that it should be interpreted as the fathers framed it, and as all parties now confess — even the authors of the new — in the interests of justice and freedom. But what possible indictment against the national supreme administration? Not a word, — not a whisper, — not a shadow. Before the present administration was inaugurated the plot of treason was perfected and consummated. To-day each State is absolutely supreme in the matter of its own institutions and laws, and not one statute of the Federal Government has crossed the lines of State sovereignty, certainly not at the South, to interpose another and a restrictive authority. Utterly, utterly and for ever groundless is this great crime of assailing the most generous, the most liberal, the most beneficent Government on the face of the earth, — a Government on the charity of which, in many public interests, the assailants lived. Before a witnessing world, — before the tribunal of impartial history, — before the bar of omniscience, the Government at our National Capital can stand up and say to the spirit of rebellion, “Wherefore I have not sinned against thee.”

Will it be pretended that the Government was quick and hot to take offence; that it rushed to arms on slight provocation, eager for the fray; that it made war cer-

tain and inevitable by precipitating its occasion and fanning its fires? Nay, — was there ever before in all human annals a Government so forbearing, so paternal, so calmly patient, so silently enduring under manifest and manifold wrongs, — hoping against hope that right reason would reassert its sway and the hour of madness pass, — pushing forbearance even to the verge of pusillanimity, straining the confidence of its friends, and stifling all the enthusiasm of its supporters, and only at last, in self-defence, by the final wrong and deadly and unprovoked assault, putting forth its power and saying to rebellion, “Thus far, but no farther!” Was there ever such a spectacle before? Kings and cabinets might well look on amazed. The muse of history will write it with unmixed admiration. Surely this Government may say it with emphasis clear and loud, “I have not sinned against thee.”

And then follows the next line of the ancient vindication, “But thou doest me wrong to war against me.” How palpable for the modern vindication that wrong! The wrong of a long and silently prepared conspiracy; of munitions of war traitorously appropriated; of public treasures plundered; of the forces and armaments of public defence scattered far and wide; of the loyalty of citizens and soldiery assiduously corrupted; of forts, and arsenals, and mints, and national vessels seized; of systematic attempts to seduce State after State from the Confederacy; of insult and injury to the national functionaries; of the allegiance of more than two mil-

lions of free white citizens to the General Government formally dissolved ; of armed occupancy of the national property ; and finally, of battle opened with cannon and mortar against a national fortress and its commissioned defenders under the flag of their country. It may look feeble and childish,—there may seem to be little of dignity and authority, when the Government waits and rises up to say, “Thou doest wrong to war against me,”—but it is not undignified in God’s sight ; it is the grandeur of receiving wrong patiently ; it is the invincible strength of right. When that protest can be truly offered, then God the righteous Judge is on our side, and with arms in our hands we may appeal to the God of battles.

And now what have we to do ? We have, first of all, to let it be known where we stand,— to come out every man from his silence and his seclusion, and express his sympathy for the Government, and take sides, if he is a patriot, with the Union and the laws of the land. And here, thank God, the response of twenty millions of hearts outruns all exhortation. Least of all is it needed in these streets and homes that any prophet urge his fellow-men to show which cause they espouse. There was with the patriotic majorities of our Northern cities and States, a long and ominous silence between the incoming of the present administration and this hour of awaking. It seemed a dull and strange apathy. It was mysterious and unintelligible. No man could fathom it. What lay beneath

this calm? What did this utter blank of expression portend? Some thought it meant distrust of the Government and its policy. Some supposed it to be a wide popular reaction from the views that had won a popular victory. Some saw in it disappointment, chagrin, and discontent. Some, and they were not a few, interpreted it as a sympathy with the Southern uprising, that would in due time take on bolder forms, and inaugurate positive measures. It was as the silence of nature in the torpid winter,—it was as the hush of life in the darkness of night,—it was as the stillness in earth and sky that precedes the breaking of the tempest. But no seer could say what the awakening would be. The silence was yet deep and impenetrable.

And men began to feel that the sentiment of loyalty was wanting to American hearts,—that ours was a style of government that could not inspire that sentiment,—that we were sensitive for State rights,—that we were proud of our power and prosperity,—that we loved and worshipped our *golden idol*, but that the spirit of chivalrous and loyal devotion to our unromantic, remote, almost impersonal government had no home in republican breasts. We know better to-day. The silence is broken and interpreted. The suppressed fire flames out. The shadowy secret is voiced forth. In that silence the fervors of patriotism were nursing themselves; the glow was becoming hotter and whiter; the pent forces were moving and accumu-

lating, like the meeting and commingling elements of subterranean fires, before the mountain summit opens, or the earthquake rocks a continent. And there is no symbol in nature that is this hour a fit type of the burning and enthusiastic loyalty of the whole *American* people. It is deeper and broader than the father of waters; it is more forceful and impetuous than the gushing life of spring; it is more annihilating and fatal to opposition than the lava stream of the live volcano; it is likest to that unearthly tempest, that rushing, mighty wind, in which was the sounding beat of celestial pinions, and which filled Jerusalem on Pentecost, crowning each mute disciple with cloven tongues of fire.

The signal was the pulse that woke at Charleston harbor. The fire-tipped rod that discharged the first cannon on the walls of Moultrie, was as the rod of Moses to the rocklike calm of the Northern heart. The crimsoned and starry flag came down at Sumter, tattered and stained by the smoke of battle, but not dis-honored. And as though that signal had been waited for, it has gone up on every hill-top and tower, on every staff, and well-nigh every home of the North, and East, and West, and every breeze of heaven lifts it, and nightly dews baptize it, and the first sunbeam of morning and the last of evening kiss it; and tearful but resolute eyes look up to it, and firm-knit hearts and planted feet are underneath; and dearer than home and life, and sacred next to our faith and our God, is

the old flag yet. Here's the sentiment of loyalty. It was not "dead, but sleeping." It has awoke. Never did king, or queen, or conqueror, or any style of imperial power draw after it a love so deep, and pure, and strong, as does that mute symbol to-day, under which our fathers fought and triumphed, under which the marches of our nation's greatness have gone onward. And now it is known at Washington, and begins to be known at that other centre of usurped sovereignty, how the Northern heart beats—and the first step, that which asserted our position and sympathy, is taken.

And the next is, that we respond to the call for *men and means*. War, when it must be, is a dreadful necessity. It comes not like the breath of May, moist with showers, and fragrant with violets. It comes like a destroying tempest, and pours abroad its arrowy sleet and iron hail, and dashes down its chained thunderbolts of doom, making wreck and havoc in all the happy fields. Paint it as you will, in colors of flaming fury and wrath, with awful death shades, you cannot go beyond the fierce and grim original. There is a symbol of prophecy which to me it always recalls as its most fitting exponent, that "fourth beast," which Daniel in his vision saw rising out of the Great Sea, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it." Woe to those that invoke it out of the tossing sea of human dissensions, and send it forth on its wasting errand;

woe to the land over which passes the tread of its terrible hoofs. Beneath the all-seeing heaven to-day we can say it is not of our invoking. But must it be? Can any human interest imperilled here be worth this dreadful cost? Is there no way to hold ourselves back from this gulf?

There is a way. Yield all which rebellion asks; upon which rebellion, with arms in its hands, insists. Yield the national fortresses on Southern soil; yield the national Territories below the line; yield the national Capital; yield these cities and villages of ours to the transition marches of Southern masters, with their retinue of slaves, lingering as they will on the way; yield the right to elect to the chief magistracy by popular suffrage the man of the popular choice; yield the righteousness of that insurrection that assumes the dignity of revolution; yield the principle that government is no government, when any portion of its subjects disallow its supremacy; and that an empire, or a kingdom, or a republic, may go to pieces and blot itself out from existence when men here and there shake off its authority and forswear allegiance; burn the old constitution and vow fealty to the new; tear down the ten thousand banners that float to-day on the Sabbath air, the venerated stars and stripes, and run up that traitorous rag that dishonors Sumter's battered and blackened walls. Do this, and we may avert war—*for a time*. Do you doubt whether we must bid so high for peace? These have been and are the

unfaltering demands. Will armed rebellion — victorious in battle — to our timid supplication reduce its demand? But can we not pause, and treat, and settle it by negotiation and diplomacy? We can if we will acknowledge a principle that forever disintegrates our Union, makes the permanent existence of government impossible, and formally inaugurates an element of anarchy and disruption as the law of our national life, —and on no cheaper terms. Now, this being the issue, dreadful as is the necessity, it must come. Look distinctly at this issue. It is not an anti-slavery war we wage; not a sectional war; not a war of conquest and subjugation; it is simply and solely a war *for the maintenance of the Government and the Constitution*. Other matters and interests may have their settlement in the progress of the strife. God's providence will order concerning that: but the question of to-day is, shall there be a Government in this land, according to the organic law of the land and the oaths of fealty to that law? Or shall rebellion, when it will and where it will, pull and tear down, and trample and destroy, at its own *lawless bidding*?

And on this issue the Government calls, *Who is on our side?* Who will rally to the national flag? Thank God again, there is no need of urgency on this point. I hear the tread of gathering thousands, — I see the deep enthusiasm of souls on fire with love and duty toward the common country. I see mothers dismissing their sons with tender benedictions, and young wives

buckling the sword-belt around the forms they leaned upon ; and sisters and (simple and homely, but honest and touching word,) sweethearts bidding adieu to the young and brave who may return no more. The streets echo to the soldier's tread, and the strains of martial music, and with "*God bless you!*" streaming over them like bannered inscriptions, our brothers and our boys go forth to the war. Not here only is this response. The uprising is universal. Among the hills of New England, through quiet old towns and peaceful villages, along the watercourses and the sea shore, in every little hamlet, where the fisherman tended his net and the stanch yeoman followed the early plow, comes the mustering cry ; and every heart answers, "Here am I, send me." Dainty youth, with soft hands and fair cheeks, turn from silks and laces to grasp the gleaming steel. Students leave their cloistered halls and the evening lamp for the camp and the bivouac. Gray-haired ministers of the gospel offer their hands to fight, their lips to pray. Young lovers walk to the altar with pale brides, then join the march. From border to border within each loyal State, these scenes are repeated ten thousand times. Our foreign-born citizens show the hearts of sons for the mother that has adopted them. And those summoned first to the conflict, go forward with proud joy. It is of God. Men are inspired. His spirit has breathed upon them. A holy baptism of love and truth for native land is let down upon them. And still the current deepens and

widens. It is no French conscription, it is no forced levy, it is no stealthy press-gang filling the ranks. It is the true loyal heart of the country offering service, — its young men, its heroic blood, its young ardor its life knit to other and kindred life. Yes, go, young patriots! lay down the implements of peace, take up the weapons of war. Look not behind you, look forward; your country calls. She is our mother in this her hour of danger. She has a right to the help of her sons. Go and be valiant and faithful. You cannot be otherwise. You bear names that cannot be dishonored. You are followed by watchwords out of the past of New England's story that will stir your hearts to noblest deeds when the combat deepens.

Go; if you fall at the threshold, if dastardly treason strike before the battle be manfully joined, we shall garner up your dust, and learn your names, and frame them into tender and immortal verse, and write them on our hearts. And those of kindred blood that mourn you, will stand by your graves with badges such as mourners in the time of peace never wear, and have their home henceforth in our love and reverence, and almost in our envy. And we that remain? Well, we must stand ready to go too, if we are wanted. Who is he that will shrink, if the call come? We have one life to live, and death will find us all. We cannot live that life to better purpose than to serve God in serving our country. Death cannot come to us at a higher post of duty than when we strike for this blood-hallowed, prayer-hallowed Union.

If we go not, the comfort of those that go in our name is our care, — the comfort of deserted home-circles, — of young families, — of widowed mothers poor and old, — of aged parents whose time and strength for gainful toil is past, — is in our heart and in our charge. We can be faithful to this most sacred trust.

If we go not, we can see that the Government shall not lack the sinews of war. Every offer of gold out of our treasures is worth more than the yellow metal; it is aid and comfort to those at the nation's head; it strikes dismay to traitorous hearts. We must have, we ought to have, but one style of utterance among us. Let the tongues and pens whose words have helped to demoralize the North, to discourage, dishearten, and perplex the Government, and to delude the South into the belief that multitudes of our population would stand by them in any mad scheme against the Union and the nationality, — tongues and pens upon which rests to-day a responsibility of crimson dye, — cease their false testimony, and if they can not speak for freedom and patriotism, at least learn the safety and wisdom of silence; and if they have no loyalty in their hearts, either put on its colors openly or openly join the league of parricides. Such men are but few to-day, any where in all the united North, — very few within this old stanch Commonwealth. Would to God there were none.

We have, let us not forget, our own hearts to guard. If war is a duty, it is a Christian duty, as sacred as

prayer,—as solemn as sacraments. That which is sometimes called the war spirit, must have no home in our breast. We must watch against its savageness,—its hate,—its revengefulness,—its murderous rancor. When public justice smites with her sword on the neck of crime, there is no passion in her stroke, only a stern and awful sorrow. I have read of a minister of the gospel, who went into battle and dispatched one after another a score of unerring bullets; and as each took effect, he apostrophized from afar the victim, "My poor fellow, God have mercy on your soul." That is the spirit in which to fight and in which to wait.

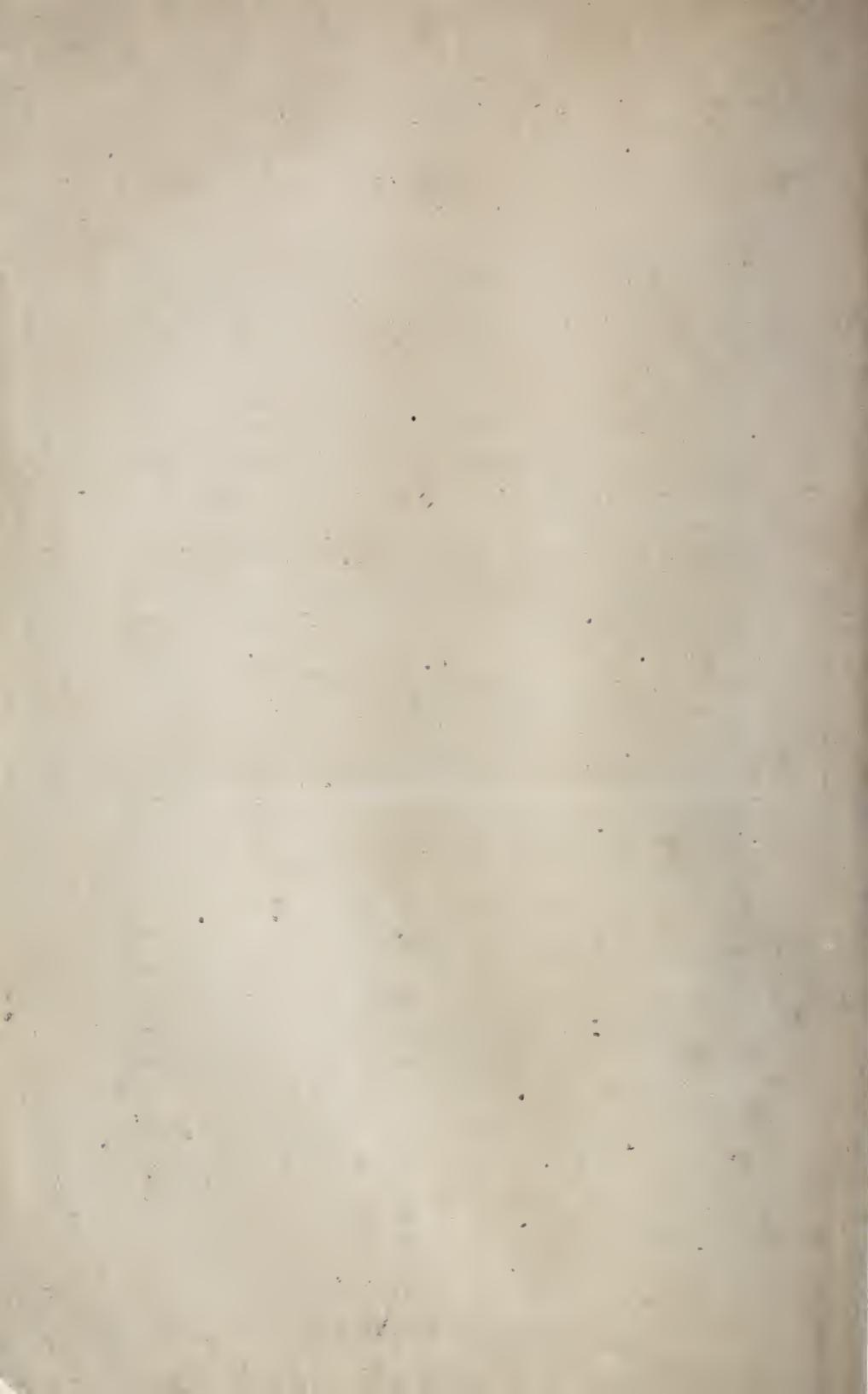
But in this spirit we ought to make the war overwhelming. Not a hundred thousand, but a half a million of men ought to be in motion. We ought to pour our legions forward. It is mercy now to go strong and strike hard. The grapple has come,—finish it quick and finish it for ever. Let this contest never need to be renewed. Let it be settled from henceforth in this land that a *Government has a right to be a Government*. Let discontent and treason learn that when they stretch out sacrilegious hands to tug at the pillars of the Union, and of all constitutional law, that hand shall be stricken down and for ever palsied. Let us meet and settle this issue now, and bury it so deep, in a grave so blood-cemented, that it shall have to the end of time no resurrection. Let us not be so eager for peace as to heal this hurt slightly. Let the laws go with the armies. **HANG TRAITORS.** Above the terror

of sword and bayonet, let there be the terror of the gibbet and the rope. Give not to treason, when it can be helped, the honor of a soldier's death. Widen the streets through riotous cities. Make a broad passage for the country's defenders. Raze the nests of conspirators, with axe and fire. This is shortest and surest, time-saving and life-saving. Let the cautery burn this ulcer out. That is the message to-day of the law of love.

And we have finally on our hearts a solemn charge of intercession. We must let no excitement separate between our souls and God. We have to bear up before him our friends and neighbors who have put on the soldiers' uniform, that they may be Christ's soldiers as well as the country's, and be at peace with God. We have to entreat his great mercy for bleeding hearts in lonely homes,—hearts whose thoughts will be straying with an irresistible fascination to the field of strife, and searching in the onset and amid the iron storm, and after sunset on the trodden ground for well-remembered and familiar forms. We have to pray as did the royal singer and captain of Israel: "Wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?" We have to remember our enemies and remember that they are brothers, and that their sufferings will be equal to ours, and greater,—and beseech God to quell the madness of their hearts, and to be gracious to their distress. We have to entreat the Lord especially that the tempest of war may speedily pass, that the bow of peace,

righteous and abiding peace, may span the dark retiring cloud, and that no such frenzy may break in again upon that great mission which he appointed us as a nation to fulfil. We have to remember, too, all the sweet charities and kind and tender offices and great and good endeavors that belong to us as men and citizens and disciples, and make our almsgiving abound, and roll forward with helping hand every scheme of human amelioration and Christian zeal on which the progress of civilization and the triumph of the gospel depend,—causes and endeavors which droop in time of war,—and earnestly and continually to commend these great and good enterprises to God's favor.

Waiting thus upon God we shall best steady ourselves in the midst of whatever fluctuations. One day shall give us tidings of victory, the next perhaps of defeat. One day the flag shall rise amid the huzzahs of triumph, the next it shall sink beneath the trampling of hostile feet. If we go by the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, our souls will be in perpetual commotion. If we stay ourselves upon God, and look into his calm face, and remember that the issue is with him, that “the Lord is a man-of-war,” that “the Lord is his name,” that he will give, if our faith and constancy fail not, the victory to the right, we too shall be calm and courageous and of good hope.



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